



Story Behind the Curve

This measure looks at whether female Medicaid beneficiaries are being screened for breast cancer. It assesses the percentage of women between 50 and 74 years of age who had a mammogram to screen for breast cancer.

Breast cancer is the 2nd most common type of cancer among American women. It is most common in women over 50. Women whose breast cancer is detected early have more treatment choices and better chances for survival. Mammography screening has been shown to reduce mortality by 20-30% among women 40 and older. A mammogram can reveal tumors too small to be felt by hand; it can also show other changes in the breast that may suggest cancer.

Some women fear mammograms; others do not understand why they are important; still others simply need a reminder when they are due for a mammogram. Vermont Medicaid is leading a performance improvement project with partners listed below to improve our breast cancer screening rates. You can read more about the strategies we're trying to reach women and their providers in the Strategies section below.

Through data analysis performed in a Breast Cancer Screening Quality Improvement (QI) project, we changed the way we run this measure starting in 2014. At that point we began excluding individuals with third party liability insurance (TPL) and beneficiaries who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid (duals). DVHA is unable to see mammogram claims for these two populations, so they should not be included in the calculation.

Action Plan

The Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) and the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) continue to work collaboratively on breast cancer screening awareness projects through the Ladies First program. Ladies First helps eligible women get breast, cervical and heart health screenings. For more information go to: <http://ladiesfirstvt.org/>